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(THE ARTISTIC PHASE OF ENGLISH ROMANTICISM.)

WHEN the productions of the pre-Raphaelite School of Art first appeared on the continent in 1855, and later at the Paris Exposition, in 1867 and in 1878, M. Chesnau, one of the foremost of recent French critics, says that it had the effect of a revelation. Until that moment indeed the best contemporary English art was entirely unknown, even to the restricted circles of critics and connoisseurs across the channel, and the few examples of more or less indifferent excellence that had been submitted to their inspection, had only moved their astonishment and disdain. The admirable eighteenth century art of England was at least known; a few masterpieces of Reynolds, The *Blue Boy* of Gainsborough, were sufficient to win from French lovers of art a liberal recognition of the greatness and distinction of the old English portraiture; and before the first quarter of our century closed, before indeed native criticism had penetrated its worth, the landscape art of Constable had devoted followers and a brilliant future before it. Historically, also, this eighteenth century art was not unfamiliar to the French; with their deep-seated habit of generalization, it was easy to dispose of an art so clearly by its spirit and direction the lineal descendant of the great Dutch and Flemish schools, and once so classified, there was an end of it. It could not claim to be purely and absolutely national; it was only one more tendency, one more manifestation in a generally recognized mode. When English effort deviated specifically from the traditions of these schools, it only showed its inferiority. But the apparition of this later English art, this strange and eccentric growth called pre-Raphaelitism, made at once a distinct impression in France, arousing in the minds of capable judges a profound and powerful interest. That impression, however, gathered only from the works of Holman Hunt, Millais, Sir Noel Paton, Arthur Hughes and a few others—Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown being unrepresented in the

Exhibition of 1855—was at first not unmixed with doubt and perplexity. Habituated by training to the temperate and harmonious style of the old masters, the French critics found this realistic and neo-mediæval art lacking in nearly all the accredited qualities of academic art. It required a deliberate effort to adapt themselves to a method and a point of view so altogether new and individual. As to method, what at once struck French taste as something bizarre was the excessive crudity of the pre-Raphaelite color, the livid tints, the pronounced reds and blues, so like the scale of tones and transitions in mediæval glass painting, the utter disregard of the principles of softness and gradation which distinguishes the Renaissance painting.

"From the first," M. Chesnau remarks, "we had some difficulty in enduring a scale of color so pronounced." This single objection fairly represents a series of technical strictures that occasioned the dubiousness I have referred to in the attitude of foreign observers. On this head certainly, the art they were inspecting, judged by the examples set before them, was open to much criticism. But the nimble French mind was not content to rest its estimate upon technic alone. Every new school has to suffer the fate of all beginnings, and behind the shortcomings which attend every tentative, there might lie really great and fruitful ideas. And this was what French criticism soon perceived, as it advanced from special to general considerations, to be particularly true in the case of the pre-Raphaelites, a happier discovery that gained for it the disinterested attention of the Parisian world. It was seen that these pictures of unknown men and an unrecognized school represented, what the portion of eighteenth century art familiar to Frenchmen had hardly represented, a truly English, a truly national art, an art in which certain predominant traits of the English nature displayed themselves as unmistakably as in its poetry. But it was not only distinctly different from English eighteenth century art, but also, it was plain, distinctly different from their own art both in spirit and in development.

French art, M. Chesnau goes on to say, busies itself with reality; in this respect and by its genesis, it is indeed Latin. Like the Latin it generalizes, seeking abstract truth as its aim

and legitimate sphere. Precise detail does not come within its scheme; it can neither use nor tolerate it. The accidental must be suppressed absolutely in order to gain the harmonious unity, which is especially sought. Instinctively it passes from particular to general forms, from the individual to the type; but in striving after so noble an end, personal initiative is sensibly diminished; the Latin tradition is followed at the cost of independent and original effect. The principle of pre-Raphaelite art is the exact reverse of this. It has no relation whatever to the English art of the last century, the Gainsborough, the Reynolds, the Constable; nor even with Turner. Hogarth and Wilkie are perhaps on one side its remote parents, but thereafter have merely the appearance of being its progenitors. It has in reality no parentage, having sprung up in English soil like one of those extraordinary vegetations—I am using M. Chesnau's own simile,—which appeared on the earth in the first stages of life, rich, varied, the outcome of a great force, which has not measured its strength or its equilibrium.*

This brief summary of M. Chesnau's views is sufficient to place us near the point of view of an acute and flexible mind, contemplating a foreign art candidly and from the outside, as it is conceivable an American similarly endowed with perception and fervor of sympathy might be able to do. But it not only offers a disinterested estimate of the pre-Raphaelite art in its entirety, but recommends itself to Americans just because it comes from one trained critically in the traditions of French art, that French art which to-day almost entirely absorbs the attention of the younger generation of American students. We are disposed to be less reluctant to listen to a plea for English art when it comes from such a source, as it cannot possibly be warped by the bias of patriotism or the bias of a particular school. Before the exhibition of Mr. Watts' works in New York, comparatively few Americans had any acquaintance with the achievements of modern English art; the special phase known as pre-Raphaelitism is still known as its best development, and what is worse, apparently no sense of loss is felt and no inclination to amend an ignorance so much to be lamented. There is no need, I suppose, of devoting less study or diminish-

*I. *La Peinture Anglaise*; II. *Les Preraphaelites*.

ing any enjoyment that may be derived from the rich and thoroughly trained art of France, but it is difficult to understand why they should be incompatible with a wider, more intelligent, and more sympathetic interest in what is strong and inspiring in English art. It is true that, so many of our painters being nursed in Parisian *ateliers*, the kind of work which is commonly seen at our annual exhibitions, is largely French in character or by association, and it is quite natural to feel a closer intimacy and to draw a keener pleasure from the parent art for which the younger artists have in a manner prepared the mind. But after all, English art, like English poetry, only not in the same degree, has for its basis a structure of traditions, historical and emotional, which is also our own by right of descent and heritage. The Germanic element in the best English achievement must, I think, appeal to chords in every Saxon nature which the Latin is powerless to vibrate.

For the attainment of this appreciation it is not necessary to lessen the obvious differences between the French and English arts, nor to magnify one at the expense of the other. Notwithstanding a number of highly gifted individual artists, and a few great names, who are, as M. Chesnau admits, *veritables maitres*, it must be conceded that the present English school is inferior to the continental in its average of talent and effort, and notably inferior in discipline and technical excellence. Strictly speaking, there is of course no English school in the sense in which there is a Flemish, a Spanish, or a Florentine school. The official traditions, the special tendencies in design and color, which contributed in those nations and localities to form a "school," have always been lacking in the artistic development of England; on the contrary the tradition and the racial tendency have both been calculated to discourage such coöperate associations. The principle of liberty, so prominent in the political life of the people, appears to have transferred itself to the æsthetic sphere, and led to a variety of individual effort, which has its own merit, but it is not that of the unity of the continental schools. It simply checked discipleship, sometimes the bane no less than the blessing of Renaissance art, and prevented the growth of any coherent and organized school or tendency. But in one respect at least this has been produc-

tive of good: it has helped to make English art original. The absence of a common stock of academic practice created conditions, and opened fields for independent thought and experiment, which were not possible in Europe. Hence a new and potent result: English art is essentially free, and by reason of its freedom,—I am quoting M. Chesneau again, “infinitely varied, full of surprises and of unforeseen initiatives.” As a free and original growth it has good claims upon the student, and its character of individuality lend it, I think, an altogether peculiar charm that cannot fail to lead to a profounder appreciation of its many noble and vigorous qualities.

Just what it was that made the pre-Raphaelite art the reverse of the French will appear shortly when we consider the character of the epoch in which it arose, and the manner in which it was differentiated from that epoch. A brief glance at previous art is the more indispensable since it discloses the kind of atmosphere in which the Fraternity grew into stature, and assists greatly in understanding the force and degree of their reaction against it and towards the Romantic themes they were to illustrate anew?

For at the moment the pre-Raphaelites began to be recognized as a group with singular claims of its own, English art was prosaic and uninspired to the last degree. Turner was in his old age, wasting his incomparable genius in fantastic experiments. Wilkie, the most charming and learned painter of his day, had begun in his last manner to hazard essays of a very doubtful worth. The annual exhibitions were filled with the works of Stanfield, a conscientious artist of no great distinction, and Cooke, Creswick, often agreeable, but for the most part tame and spiritless. “On all sides one saw Cooper’s cows, Eastlake’s smiling, insipid faces, Mulready’s sentimentalities, the false high art of Gaudy,”—a mass of commonplace portraits, indifferent landscapes, and mediocre incident-paintings. In the entire period what is remarkable is the lack of intellectuality, the lack of elevation in subject, the lack of invention, the lack of distinction in design. Mr. Ruskin has commented on it in terms honestly severe, but no one can return to the pictures of that day, or good prints of them, without finding himself overcome with

weariness at the endless succession of "cattle pieces, sea pieces, fruit pieces, family pieces, the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls, and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers." It reminds us that they were not so far after all from the arid atmosphere of the last century. The exhibition of 1760, the first public one in England, for whose catalogue Dr. Johnson wrote the preface, called forth from the great critic, ignorant as he was of art, a not dissimilar censure on the worthlessness of many of the productions, a hearty growl of contempt for the intellectual value of "the loaf and cheese that could provoke hunger, the cat and canary bird, and the dead mackerel on a dead board." To the pre-Raphaelites, however, it was not only the choice of subject in previous art which offended them. They thought it tainted with generalization, which, in the matter of technic, obscured the subject painted, by an imperfect attention to detail, a certain vice of mistiness. Outside a few men like Stanfield, Creswick, and Harding, who worked with a fair degree of precision, there was in the treatment of landscape a want of exactness and decision, of the human figure an indefiniteness, which they considered a grave fault of art. But this is an objection that belongs more properly to the early pre-Raphaelite point of view, and which was afterwards less insisted on. The fact remains, however, that with few exceptions the science of color in the art immediately preceding was in a low stage. From Reynold's time until Turner's there were no great colorists in England, and with a single reservation in favor of Leslie, none from Turner's until Rossetti's and Watt's. As for design, and the qualities which produce noble and harmonious design, the single example of Stothard's sweet and gracious creations set aside, it scarcely existed in any high degree of excellence. It is no wonder that in opposing themselves to the temper of the eighteenth century art as a whole, the pre-Raphaelites should have recoiled most of all from the particular and degenerate form of it immediately present to them. To minds newly aroused by the mediæval impulses about them, and already turning their faces towards the spiritual art of the early Florentine school, it must have seemed as if the men that environed them had forgotten or masked the radiant life of

the earth, the mystery of human passion, and the bright loveliness of the body. Certainly they had forgotten that at which art aims superlatively, to cherish and embody the ideal while remaining within the sensuous.

It was to the ideal that the gifted Brotherhood, now turned with all the ardor of young men freshly inspired. Their aim was twofold, to conceive nobly of life and mind, to choose elevated and original subjects, and then to embody them with the utmost fidelity to nature. The one developed a more catholic sense of beauty in English art and the other advanced its technic. But leaving for the moment the practical results of pre-Raphaelitism, it is more interesting to see whither it was led in its quest for noble and beautiful subjects. Moreover, it is in this departure that the artistic manifestation of the romantic tendency most plainly appears. The romantic tendency is indeed dominant here.

For through two sources, an earlier type of art, and a certain atmosphere in the society about them, the pre-Raphaelites were impelled to seek their ideals in the sphere of the religious sentiment. The revival of that sentiment at Oxford and among men of culture had opened for the first time to English eyes the great neglected art of the *Quattrocentisti*. Neglected it is necessary to add, since, throughout the eighteenth century, it lay lost not only to the English people, but unrecognized or scorned by the dilettante. Now, however, to Rossetti and his associates, its resurrection in poetry, in religion, in architecture, brought an entire cycle of motives of which they discerned the shadowy counterpart already in their own hearts and in the imaginative stirrings about them. There, in those dim ages of faith, they found in profusion and in their purest forms, as yet untouched by pagan license, the noblest poetical embodiment of religious ideals, tender dreaming on divine things, aspirations, holiness. The grave beauty of Mantegna, and Giotto's simple and austere symbolism, attracted them as Raphael and Michel Angelo had attracted Reynolds and his group; in Sandro Boticelli's melancholy grace, in the delicate musings, the soft angelic form of Lippi, in the mystic passion of Fra Angelico, there was a world of new and subtle meanings for them. And what a

world it was, set beside the native art of the eighteenth century, and that which lay about them! How suffused with warmth and feeling, how fair in its spirituality, how fresh and gracious in its appeal to the emotions! They saw here indeed a great art, great first of all in those eternal qualities which spring from the mind, elevation, harmony, conception, nobleness; and secondly, as artists, they saw in the technic a principle that sprang from very reverence, absolute fidelity to nature, which to these old Florentines symbolized the divine, a loving and exact transcript of the humblest things of the earth. No flower, or herb, no scroll or bit of carving, was too insignificant for them, being part of a divine idea; and obediently like the old building saints, in the service of the church, they wrought it out with the grace and vigor of the minutest skill. It was this Gothicism of the pre-Raphaelites, this mingled nobility in aim and elaboration in detail, that their English followers loved and sought to import into their art.

And the mediæval tendencies in society assisted, and partly determined, the return to the types which the early Florentine art only suggested. The connection of the Oxford revival with pre-Raphaelitism is not merely a contiguity, but a sequence in order of ideas and feelings, an intimate alliance in aims and methods.

Precisely the same causes contributed to the genesis of both movements, and largely determined their special characteristics. Without Newman and the Tracts, without Keble and Pusey and the *Lyra Apostolica*, without that other artistic revival that took its rise with Pugin and Rickman, and the whole movement toward the recovery of Gothic design and mediæval sentiment, the pre-Raphaelite group might never have risen into any considerable degree of favor and influence. Each, as a centre, had contributed to let loose the ideas that were in the air, to reinforce them in its own way, and to stimulate minds in every department of activity. The interdependence of these various movements is exemplified in miniature in Rossetti. As a fact he seems to have felt very early the stimulus of mediæval motives. Whatever opinion is entertained of the inborn and self-supported strength of his bias in this direction,

it should be remembered that before his first precocious poem, the *Blessed Damozel*, written in 1846, the first wave of the New Romanticism had already passed over the representative poets of that period. In Tennyson's little volume of 1842, in Miss Barrett's *Romance*, and here and there in Browning's *Bells and Pomegranates*, the charm of romantic themes begins to be caught and mirrored, though as yet in a broken and uncertain manner. Rossetti's painting, too, betrays the operation of the same influence. A discriminating critic of high repute, Mr. W. B. Scott, thought when he saw his first picture, *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*, composed in the same year of his first poem, that it was directly inspired by the Tractarian movement, of which the artist seemed about to become the expositor.* However this may be, it is quite certain that the young men who afterward worked under Rossetti, and each of whom rose to distinction in the two-fold province of Romantic art, were exposed for a time directly to the atmosphere of the Oxford religious revival and the artistic phase that accompanied it. When Rossetti went to Oxford in 1856 to paint those unfortunate frescoes in the interior of the cupola of the Union, he met among the undergraduates, Mr. Swinburne, Mr. William Morris, Mr. E. Burne-Jones, and Mr. Spencer Stanhope. It was owing to his wise encouragement that the greatest artistic figure in the group, Mr. Burne-Jones, was induced to abandon orders and cast his lot in the more attractive but more precarious profession. In the locality, the associations, the moment, it is possible to find the impulses which led each of these men in their adopted art towards mediæval ideas. To the artists it was an impulse in the direction of sacred art. None of them had perhaps listened to the persuasive voice in St. Mary's pulpit; the critical hour of religious transition was past; but the echoes of the storm had not yet died away. The old questions and beliefs which the Anglo-Catholics had resuscitated at the cost of so much dissension were still being talked over, but with calmness and

* The closeness of the intellectual connection was in this case probably exaggerated. The remarks of Mr. Gosse in the *Century* for September, 1882, while disposing of this point, are, I am bound to say, opposed to the general view I have taken of Rossetti's relation to the Oxford movement.

deliberation. Apart from the heat of controversy, there was perhaps all the more reason why contemplative and artistic natures should return to mediæval topics and mode of feeling; they had the additional charm which quiet and security can give. But the university was far from being in exclusive possession of these religious ideas. They affected a restricted portion of English society, and it was by their diffusion and activity in society, also, that the pre-Raphaelites were impelled that way. They seemed to be reflecting the needs of the time, a time in which this was only one but yet a powerful and attractive current.

In its inception the pre-Raphaelite movement was first of all, I need hardly say, a reaction, and in this regard also it is allied to the immediately preceding movements in literature and religion. Like them it was a reaction from the typical temper of the eighteenth century, a distinct protest within its own sphere against the aims and methods of the eighteenth century art. Its difference from them, however, is that it began and developed at a so much later period. And this is a more striking circumstance than is at first apparent. The reaction in the form, treatment, and subject-matter of poetry was mature at the threshold of our century; the religious reaction at Oxford broke out in 1830; but the artistic recoil can scarcely claim a beginning earlier than 1850. Why was this so? In the general renunciation of the rationalistic thought of the eighteenth century, why was art the last to be affected? I think it is because art in the English race has far less vitality, far less importance in the rational mind, far less of the spirit of progression in it than either religion or poetry. It has always been behind literature, inexpressibly less rich and various, and reflecting less the direction of the British mind. Hence, when taste expanded and romantic ideals arose, art was the last to feel and embody them. The case of Blake and Turner, those early romantics, illustrates the truth of the reflection; for they stood alone, each in a domain of his own, representing no impulse of their generation, and in return leaving no immediate trace of their thought. English art went on in the same old ruts for many years as if Blake and Turner had never painted. Long

after Wordsworth and Shelley, shaking off the fetters of the last century, had reformed poetry, after Byron and Keats and Lander, nay even after Tennyson had restored the world of old romance and pagan beauty, and after the sentiment of mediæval religion had come back to stir the hearts of men, art still lingered in idea with Young and Thompson, Goldsmith and Crabbe, still trod in the prosaic paths of the last century.

We are now in a position to examine the pre-Raphaelite art quite by itself.

Two special characteristics, I have said, the demand that subjects should be poetic and beautiful in themselves, and the rendering of them with exact and minute reference to nature, were its distinctive marks. Let us see to what they led in their actual painting, what they produced of gain and what of loss. Every lover of art will readily recall Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World*, a picture once famous in English society and still sufficiently familiar to most of us. It is not necessary to see the original in color to observe how far this composition is removed from the trivial subjects with which the previous art dealt most commonly. It is the Christ, crowned with his crown of thorns, wet with the night's dew, passing by the gleam of a lantern from door to door, seeking the house of the just. It is just this and nothing more; but the conception stands before us in its simplicity, and moves us by its noble and pathetic charm. The Divine Master seeking among men for one who is like unto himself! A profound feeling of regret and melancholy overcomes us. Back of the quest we recollect the bitter travail of the Passion—does not the crown of thorns symbolize it?—and contrast that suffering undergone for men and the divine patience which even now will not receive its meed when it comes to the door of those justified by his agony and death. It touches at once the core of the religious sentiment in us, and leaves us stirred and awe-struck at a divine condescension so gracious and so long enduring.

There is another composition of this accomplished painter entitled *After Sunset in Egypt*, also in his first manner when design and intellectuality of theme were still essential to his complete expression. "Upon such an indication, what," M.

Chesnau asks, "would you imagine it to be? A vast landscape with oriental lines, bathed in the warm shadow of the twilight, a pale sky, colored with flame far off in the horizon where the earth disappears in its measureless abyss? There is nothing of that in Mr. Hunt's picture. The motive of his painting is the figure of a woman, some patrician, some daughter of Pharaoh. Amply robed in a sumptuous and serous stuff which envelopes her from head to foot in its black folds, with shades of intense blue, she stands upright, in the rigid attitude of a bronze caryatid, on the bank of a sacred river. Large rings hang from her ears; collars of gold and coral drop upon her breast. Is she a daughter of the Nile? Is she not rather the goddess of harvest-time, the Egyptian Ceres? In one hand she holds a sheaf of wheat posed upon her brown head, in the other an amphora of baked clay, whose engobe varnished with a pale green, hard and glistening, contrasts with the flat tints of her pale and serene face. From all sides flocks of familiar pigeons wing confidently about her. Eager to catch the seed which is generously accorded them, they rise clasping in the steely horn of their rosy beaks the seeds that have fallen on the ground at her feet; they peck at the sheaf, plunging their delicate heads into it, while those whose hunger is satisfied, circle and wheel about with collars of tremulous feathers, making a true aureole. Beyond a stream flows silently by: gliding peaceably, without noise or eddy, under cover of its large-leaved lotus. Afar the harvest-fields succeed each other to infinite distance, to the foot of the mountains empurpled with the last rays of sunlight. It is the image of opulence and serenity, of nature left to herself. Is it indeed that? Is it not something else? . . . It disquiets me, however, this mournful figure, and I would wish to decipher the enigma of the Sphinx. Shall I propose a new interpretation? I see no longer the daughter, or wife of a king, or goddess; I surprise the very image of modern Egypt. In those eyes without a glow, cold and black, impenetrable to light as an extinguished coal, in that immobility prophetic as that of slave or courtesan. I seek the symbol of Egypt dethroned of the grandeur of her antique civilization, stripped of her intellectual royalty, reduced to the only fecundities that the citron of the Nile, that eternal

nature imposes to its fertile climate. Why does she turn her back upon the river, if not to behold the gigantic ruins of her older puissancy, lying prone on her banks. Beneath the weight of the heavy grain, she still remains firm and sombre as granite, and like it, without life; she has only a vegetable, an animal life, and is at bottom only a spark, a glimmer, a souvenir."

In studying these pictures, it is necessary to remark at the outset, the imperfections of the romantic method, under its pre-Raphaelite form, become clearly visible. The fundamental conception is what impresses us at first, elevated, intellectual, even mythical in its purport, but the manner in which it is made impressive is instructive; the naturalism, the lavish use of symbol, the appeal to literary ideas, throw a flood of light upon the working of the romantic temper in the plastic arts.

In each of these designs, for instance, there is a certain demand made on the culture of the spectator. The painters are above all poets, cultivated men, familiar with history and literature; their ideas are literary, full of recondite suggestions, which must be made intelligible in color. But the endeavor to render them into adequate clearness in so fixed a medium, stretches their resources to the utmost, and they are forced to resort to the illustrative symbol. In so doing they in a measure exceeded the limits of painting. This is in effect the charge made against the earlier pre-Raphaelite art by M. Chénau and Mr. Hamerton alike, independently of each other. If it is an exaggeration of a healthy truth, however, it is one that belongs to a goodly part of romantic art in general, the aim of which is so largely the expression of character. Yet the objection, if not urged too far, certainly holds good of painting so freighted with historical intention as Hunt's Egyptian allegory. It would seem that an image in line and color is by the very concreteness and definiteness of its medium designed to convey its lesson or story simply and directly to the eye of the beholder. The result of a less obvious appeal to knowledge, is in most cases what it is here, a certain obscurity which may mean, as the puzzled critic finds it does, a dozen different things. But a just consideration of this disputed point in art would carry us beyond bounds; it is sufficient to note it, and the super-

abundant symbolism to which it led. *Dante's Dream* illustrates how marked was this need for symbol. It is as if it had become a necessity of their thought, without which indeed a mere thought was bare and void. Expressional purpose overrides the capability of the technic; the story is told in line and color, and exquisitely told, but only to the cultivated sense of the few, who are willing to examine and ponder its last meaning. Between the artistic and the public this employment of a too minute and intricate emblem seems to raise an insuperable barrier. Instead of appealing to popular, it appears to esoteric taste, and loses correspondingly in breadth and clearness.

The naturalism also, which marked especially the early work of the pre-Raphaelites, had its moment of exaggeration. In previous painting there was, as we shall see, a kind of excuse for a reaction in this direction, but as a principle of art it was at first carried beyond measure. It was perhaps a part of the religious cult, as Mr. Ruskin points out, that they should seek to transcribe natural forms in a spirit of such rigorous and relentless copyism. The loving care with which every bud and leaf and tendril is treated by the painter, has in it a sentiment that is referable to reverence of a divine beauty. But whatever its origin, the fault of its excesses were soon evident enough. It involved the death or subordination of the selective instinct, and thus injured the ideal itself, which is in a measure the product of selection and combination. It led ultimately to a tendency to "immortalize beetles and mushrooms," the common and uncomely as well as the choice in landscape. It is related that in Holman Hunt's *Hireling Shepherd* a naturalist recognized the very species of the butterfly at which the young girl gazes with surprised delight, and named without hesitation the flowers that blossom at her feet. But this, surely, is not the aim of a great art, which depends, not so much upon details as upon the quality of the whole impression. Applied to historical subjects, where all the resources of archeological erudition are brought to bear to perfect the realism, its erroneousness is amusingly indicated in an anecdote told respecting the minute realism of Mr. Hunt's *Christ Teaching the Doctors*. To embellish this painting, to render it complete and absolutely truthful in every detail, the

artist made a prolonged sojourn in Judea, studying the character of the country, and consecrating five years of his life to reading and research of all kinds. "Mais, hélas !" the narrator proceeds, "il est difficile de contenter tout le monde et son valet. Après avoir examiné le tableau, une dame jeune dit gravement : "Cela est fort beau ; seulement, on voit que l'auteur ne connaissait pas le trait distinctif de la race de Juda il a donné à ses docteurs les pieds plats qui sont de la tribu de Ruben, tandis que les hommes de Juda avaient le cou-de-pied fortement cambré ?"

But if such examples help to disclose the exaggerations of the pre-Raphaelite school, they reveal also on the other hand its really great and admirable qualities, which taught an invaluable lesson to the English art of that period. In their revolt against established methods, as happened with Byron and Shelley, with Newman and the religionists, they went by the inevitable law of all reforms too far. The principles of idealism in conception and analysis in treatment, fundamental and indispensable as they are, carried them into the extremes I have noted, on one hand an obscure symbolism, and on the other a too minute copyism. As always happens, again, these excesses bore in themselves the seed of a secondary reaction and a gradual readjustment towards a truer equilibrium. For in time, after the benefit of the two-fold principle had been exhausted, a greater nobleness of type and a wider truth of statement gained for art, the errors of the school began to correct themselves. Rossetti and his group, with a bare exception or two, it is necessary to add with emphasis, outgrew their narrow and crude beginnings, abandoned those propositions which had never at any time been fixed as canons, and measurably expanded, if they did not materially alter, the purposes and means of their art. The recoil upon their earlier selves made itself felt throughout the artist world in England ; it was an ultimate expansion into a complete ideal. English art in general advanced from analysis to synthesis ; what it lost in a mannered minuteness of detail, in a too rigid exactness of description, it gained in harmony of design, in amplitude and a greater breadth of effect. But the genuine worth of the pre-Raphaelite effort remains unquestionable. It was

a veritable starting point, and if transient, a necessary stage in art-growth, containing and enforcing, as Mr. Ruskin says, "the essential germs of a right aspiration." It was superseded, but not before it had restored the mental and moral qualities in which previous art had been more or less deficient, earnestness, sincerity, ardor, imagination ; in this, again, showing a certain analogy with the movements in poetry and religion. So along with its excesses the romantic mind brought its own priceless contributions to English painting.

Moreover, this contribution of romanticism to art, and the decided advance it signalled, becomes the more directly apparent when it is placed again in sharp opposition to the art of the last century. How is it possible to set them side by side, these two contrasted arts springing from antagonistic influences, without observing how much English art regained by the restoration of the older force, the outburst of thought and feeling, the new crowd of motives, the more irregular but richer taste we call romanticism? And this, certainly, is the side of the general subject which is most interesting and instructive. It takes us out of the region of pure painting, of technical craft, into the region of philosophy and of every-day life. It is a phase in the larger history of taste, a record of expanding knowledge and emotion which works itself out under our very eyes.

In the individual mind there is scarcely anything more interesting than change and traceable growth. We watch it, in the most familiar instance, in our friends, in all the novelty, the apparent inconsequence, or the visible sequence of its transitions. It affects ourselves ; it touches our own lives and possibly transforms them. We rejoice, or we are sad, in its manifestations ; their ideals may pass beyond our own power of apprehension, lift themselves above our heads, and become to us as spectres in the air ; or they may remain with us, or we ourselves advance in a glad unconsciousness to meet and embrace them. But whatever happens, the interest in our friend's intellectual and emotional progress seldom wholly ceases ; the moment it subsides, we are no longer genuinely human ; the bond that unites man to man, sympathy, is broken irretrievably. And in circles beyond our own, in the recorded lives of

distinguished people, the world's favorites and intimates, it is ever the interior drama which draws and attracts us by the force of its own supreme attractiveness. What is it but this that makes St. Augustine's confessions so fascinating, that draws us to Erasmus, to Montaigne, to Alfieri, to Gibbon, to John Stuart Mill, and to so many others, who with fashions of thought foreign to our own, still keep us amused and interested in so delightful a manner? That which moved them, the elements definable and indefinable from within and without, is moving us also every day, from point to point, in a growth only half discerned, in a direction whose end is hidden, until some sudden collision or awakening bring us into surprised contact with our new selves. And so, I think, in a movement like that from the classicism of the last century to the romanticism of our own day there is something of vital interest and attraction far beyond any disputable points of art theory and practice. We are only after all transferring attention from an individual to a collective evolution, studying the progress of many minds towards a deeper and wider sense of beauty, a typical body of taste and effect.

What, then, is the precise relation of this art to that of the eighteenth century? What change is it exactly that romanticism has wrought in the artistic sphere? It is nowhere so happily and briefly expressed, I think, as in Mr. Theodore Watt's observation on the exhibition at London of Rossetti's pictures in 1882. "Had the committee at Burlington house," he says, "purposely arranged galleries four and five, with the view of contrasting the artistic temper of the eighteenth century with the artistic temper which, if Rossetti's work is vital, may become the characteristic note of our own day, they could not have done so more effectually than by hanging in one gallery the Reynolds, the Gainsboroughs, and the Romneys, and in the other those wonderful 'incarnate poems' which have of late years been silently coloring the upper atmosphere of English art, as the Opal of Arden colored the cloud temple of the spirits of the air, though imprisoned by the gnomes at the foot of the hill. To pass from one gallery to the other was to pass from the comfortable world of domestic materialism, which the eighteenth century accepted as the final cause (and a

most worthy final cause) of the entire universe, to those older worlds of wonder and mystery which, though nowadays mirrored only in the eyes of poets and children are as real, perhaps, as London is or as Ninevah was." Reflecting on this pregnant contrast Mr. Watts asks if this particular instance does not disprove the common notion, so much insisted on by students of evolution, that the mind moves from "a temper of wonder to a temper of acceptance." Literary evolution, he implies, is not always symmetrical, nor in a continuous straight line. Some great civilizations have reached the period of acceptance, and then have turned back and become haunted by a sense of mystery as great as ever. This was what happened to the poetry of Shelley and Coleridge compared with the poetry of Dryden and Pope. The absolute correctness of the theory in this special instance is, perhaps, open to doubt. But whatever may be said of the conclusions Mr. Watts draws from the main proposition, the phrase he employs hits very happily the chief distinctions between the antagonistic art. The English mind has moved "from a temper of acceptance to a temper of wonder." Is not that strikingly just and true? Is it not equally so when we make a larger synthesis, and include in the concept the temper that has given the directions to poetry as well as painting, and guided the tendencies of religious thought from Butler's day to Newman's and Frederick Robertson's. But to show how and to what degree the remark is just and true in this three-fold field, would be equivalent to considering the whole genesis and history of the New Romanticism, and I am only finding my way now into a single corner of it. Happily, with regard to this one corner, we have in Rossetti a typical representative, a true romantic, and it is in the power and secret of his art to light up the entire matter, and let us see more clearly how the temper of wonder, once more revived in more latter-days, has operated in a mind so individual and so responsive to its finest appeals.

'For in Rossetti this temper of wonder is but another name for the imagination, exquisitely sensitive and prone to dwell on the subtle and more secret problems of human nature and fate. The rare class to which he belongs by affinity of spirit is sealed by this quality of imagination as with seven seals.

There are those, and an endless procession of able and solid minds they make, who appear to find adequate satisfaction and worthy themes in the definite world of fact and outward existence, but Rossetti was a true soul-born romantic in this, that this outward existence, this tangible surface of things, was to him only a symbol and suggestion of the something he conceived or felt to lie beyond it. Following nature as obediently, copying her as faithfully as the most humble and prosaic realist, his eye turned ever inwards for the supernal image it could not see, which could only be guessed at dimly in its essence, though its ultimate purport might be clear. Hence in his work the touch of mystery, the shadow of the unknown, whose borders fluctuate from moment to moment, are never lacking; they surround him like an atmosphere; they give his best achievement that distinctive mark which at once separates it from the period before him, and somewhat isolates him even in his own generation. In the beautiful prose allegory of the *Hand and Soul*, there is a description in which Rossetti forecast his own attitude as an artist, and expresses by the way his own convictions of what art should aim for. "Chraio, servant of God," says the fair woman who was his soul, "take now thine art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, and in the weeds of this time; only with eyes which seek out labor, and with a faith, not learned, yet zealous of prayer. Do this; so shall thy soul stand before thee always, and perplex thee no more." This seems to contain the key to Rossetti's creed, that art must be both sensuous, 'in the weeds of this time,' and spiritual, with eyes of faith, 'zealous of prayer.' Like that great and visionary romantic before him, the English seër of Heaven and Hell, he saw and keenly enjoyed the beauty of Hellenic art; many of his sonnets, and some of his drawings of heads and figures, are wrought in the spirit of Greek clearness and harmonious proportions. But that is not his characteristic mood, any more than it is Blake's; his characteristic mood is profoundly romantic. It is the temper of wonder, the element of mystery, which pervades *Dante's Dream*, his largest and in most respects his greatest work. In the *Vita Nuova* Dante recounts him in a dream he suddenly became aware of one, hoarse and tired out, coming to him and asking:

'Hast thou not heard it said
 My lady, she that is so fair, is dead.'
 * * * * *
 Then Love said, 'Now shall all things be made clear,
 Come and behold our Lady where she lies.'
 These 'wildering phantasies
 Then carried me to see my Lady dead,
 Even as I there was led,
 Her ladies with a veil were covering her :
 And with her was such very humbleness
 That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'

This is the moment the painter has chosen to picture Dante, led by Love, approaching the couch of the dead Beatrice. The room in which she lies, with its winding stairs, its lamp in which the flame expires, its sad Latin inscription from Jeremiah, its allegoric accessories, is conceived in a spirit as imaginative as is shown in the treatment of the chief figure on the canvas. The roses and violets in the frieze typify the purity of her who lies at peace, and the sleep of death that comes in the spring-time and is watched over by Love is suggested in the poppies that lie strewn about, the may-blossoms, and the crimson doves hovering near. The soul of the dead mounts upward, borne by flame-colored angels that are dimly discerned through an opening in the roof. This intense personification extends to the central figures as well. Dante has paused in awed reverent grief as the solemn significance of the scene enters his soul, but Love, a figure in a garb of flame color, bearing a scallop-shell, leads him forward that he may kiss the dead. The hand that is not clasped by Love holds an arrow and some apple-blossom sprays. In the centre of the picture lies Beatrice clothed in white, pale, beautiful, immobile, her cloud of golden hair falling downwards, where the thin fair hands are crossed upon the breast.

And with her was such very humbleness
 That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'

In this lofty and harmonious composition, so charged with the very pathos of sorrow, we have an extreme example of Rossetti's love of symbol. The figures of Dante and Beatrice alone would not convey to him the whole of Dante's conception ; the flowers and birds and inscriptions grew up about his interpretation as integral and necessary portions of it.

Another picture, *How they met themselves*, shows better than any other I know, how profound was his sense of mystery, how subtle his penetration of the supernatural. I quote Mr. Sharp's description of this very remarkable design. "The time is towards twilight, in a thick and presumably lonely wood, where two lovers have met by secret appointment. They have stopped to embrace, hidden from the world by the dark forest, from heaven by the roof of closely interwoven branches and dense foliage, when suddenly they behold themselves walk towards and past them. The two supernatural figures have nothing to denote their immortality save a gleaming light along the line of their bodies, not, however, visible to the lovers; with clasped hands they approach and slowly pass on, the lady looking right into the eyes of her mortal double, and the man with a fixed and terrible expression staring back the startled gaze of the lover. The lady of life, if she may be so called in contradistinction, falls fainting against a tree, with her face deathly pale with sudden fear and horror, and her lover, with his left arm supporting her, with his right draws his sword in order to make trial of this strange double of himself—but for some reason his arm seems paralyzed, and he cannot raise the weapon. This is the moment chosen for illustration: in another the lovers will be alone again, shuddering with fear at the occult significance of this strange and unnatural meeting with, to all intents, themselves."*

But it is quite impossible to convey by any word painting the glamour that hangs over this extraordinary work. It reveals such an intimate perception of the weird and eerie, and such a power to give them out anew in concrete form with intensified meaning that it can be paralleled only in some of Blake's artistic or Coleridge's poetic fantasies.

* Dante Gabriel Rossetti : *A Record and a Study*, p. 138.

ROSSETTI AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES.

[Continued from page 522.]

WHAT is to be said of a man living in the heart of modern London who had never read an act of Parliament, nor looked into a book of science, nor pretended to any acquaintance with recent philosophy? There are those who would summarily, on general principles, dismiss a personality that answered to this description. What relation, they would ask, could such an one have to his generation? He must have passed his existence quite obscurely in some out-of-the-way corner of this great world. If he had nothing to do with science, philosophy, or art, for what could he possibly stand as fruitful or representative in his time? Yet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, of whom this is approximately true, had without doubt a very intimate relation to his generation, and an influence positive and seminal upon a large and important class of minds; and it endures still and increases in strength from day to day in ways which we hardly recognize. The wisdom which it was his privilege to absorb and reveal was that of neither science, philosophy, nor politics, being, if I may say it without tautology, the wisdom of beauty; a special and greatly needed message which the time-spirit partly, and partly his own brooding imagination, enabled him to embody in its inherent purity and attractiveness. Yes, in reverting once more to the life of this unique poet-painter, it is necessary to shut out utterly the world's turmoil and strife, to forget the insistent "confederate pleas" of ordinary life and as much as possible place ourselves in the serene and toilful atmosphere of art. The world in which he worked and dreamed is like a quiet close, set apart in the shadow, lit only by passing gleams of sunshine; a cloistral succession of nights and days filled with labor and austere musing, rapt by radiant visions of color, and interspersed with song and elegy.

There is now no longer any question of the high and exceptional place that Rossetti holds in modern English art and poetry. It remains only to fix his exact relation to his time, to determine

the quality of his genius, its ultimate direction and worth, and finally his place among the romantic poets. From a task so delicate I could not but shrink if left to my single and unaided judgment, but, fortunately, the preliminary material for such an essay has already been furnished and the verdict of capable judges, summed up from various standpoints, already rendered. Taken collectively, these sympathetic studies of Rossetti in his twofold capacity as poet and artist, supply us with a vivid and delightful portrait, and throw a flood of light upon his aims and achievements.

Produced in solitude, and for private patrons almost always, Rossetti's works in color were, with rare exceptions, never submitted to public examination until after his death as late as three years ago. But with all the disadvantages attending an exhibition so long deferred, they immediately received the most generous and glowing recognition. From quarters whence it was least to be expected, there came multiplied assurances of appreciation and discriminating praise. It is perhaps not too much to say that the moment these strange pictures were seen and tested by the light of the best critical knowledge in England, and estimated apart from the prejudices of opposing sects, Rossetti was at once assigned to his rightful rank among the English masters of color and design. Thus, at least once in history, the ardent prophecies and adulations of devoted friends were verified! The distinguished circle of poets and critics who surrounded him with such tender care and solicitude, as if in shielding him from ignorant misapprehension to make amends for the world's neglect, only perceived early in his career what now, after the opportunity of meed is past, is an open and incontestable secret to all.

Since then, in so brief an interval, we have had the mournful pleasure of reading the documents to which I have referred, the several biographical sketches, memoirs, and special critiques, which betoken the literary and artistic, as well as the wide general interest taken in the solitary of Cheyne Walk. These volumes for the most part have issued directly from the Rossetti inner circle, a group remarkable even in this age for its culture and a certain mark of distinction;—and wherever in these there is occasion to express a judgment, lest it might

be thought biased by intimate relation with a man so magnetic in his personality as Rossetti, I have presented as far as possible the views of the most disinterested critics. And as no foreign critic so far as I know has pronounced a deliberate estimate of his work, it is to the fairest and freest expression of English opinion that we have to look. Such, happily, is to be found in the lately published papers of Mr. Ruskin, who late in life corrected his earlier enthusiasm for the pre-Raphaelite school, and judged it with more moderation, of Mr. Watts, Mr. J. Comyns Carr, and Mr. Sidney Colvin.*

And first let us see what is the best English opinion upon the place to which Rossetti is entitled and the influence he exerted in modern art. "I may be permitted, in the reverence of sorrow," writes Mr. Ruskin, "to speak first of my much loved friend, Gabriel Rossetti. But in justice no less than in the kindness due to death, I believe his name should be placed first on the list of men within my own range of knowledge who have raised and changed the spirit of modern art: raised in absolute attainment, changed in direction of temper."† These words are full of weight, and they came from the great art critic at a time when he had outgrown the movement which Rossetti in his early life represented. "He speaks in sympathy as well as with authority," says Mr. Carr, whose clear self poise as a critic lends additional force to his comment in this tribute,

* General observations upon the school and its aim are scattered about the several volumes of the *Modern Painters*, as i. 297, 918; ii. 143, 226, 237, 242, 255.

Early single copies of Mr. Ruskin's interesting little tract on pre-Raphaelitism are very difficult to procure, but it is to be found in its entirety in almost any complete edition of his works. Written in 1851, and containing therefore his earliest views, it ought to be compared with his *Three Colours of pre-Raphaelitism*, in the *Nineteenth Century Review* for November and December, 1878, and above all with his recent utterances in the lectures on the *Art of England*, the realistic and mythic schools (Hart and Rossetti). Mr. Theodore Watt's paper, the *Truth about Rossetti*, appeared in the same periodical in March, 1883, and Mr. Carr's in the *English Illustrated Magazine* for October of the same year. Mr. Colvin and Cosmo Monkhouse, each have an article in the *Magazine of Art*, the latter in January, 1883, entitled *A pre-Raphaelite Collection*, and the former in April number, 1882, and also in the *Fortnightly* for October, 1867.

† Lecture I. on the *Art of England*, 1883.

“and there is ground for belief that the deliberate judgment to which he has committed himself is slowly gaining acceptance at the hands of the public.” And he goes on to add :

“The estimate of his career, which I have borrowed from Mr. Ruskin, can be made good, without extravagant or indiscriminate praise, and his genius when it is rightly apprehended will be seen to be of too masculine a temper to need to be championed for its shortcomings and defects. Those who knew Rossetti personally can never be in doubt as to the original and surviving force that was in him. They will be in no fear lest the strength of his individuality should suffer by plain speaking, and although it is true that he shunned criticism while he lived, there can be no reason why his work should not now be temperately and dispassionately discussed, with a fair statement of its great merits and its obvious defects. Rossetti's strong personal feeling in regard to publicity has indeed given rise to some natural misconception as to the strength of his individuality. It is perhaps a plausible presumption that a man who so resolutely detaches himself from the ordinary social life of his time, and who prefers, even as regards his work, to avoid a constant reference to the public judgment of his contemporaries, is therefore secretly apprehensive lest the strength of his convictions should be shaken by attack. But such a conclusion fails to take into account a paradox of the artistic temperament by no means peculiar to Rossetti. The conditions which certain natures demand for the free exercise of their faculties are often wholly unconnected with the strength or weakness of intellectual character : the process of artistic production may be helped or hindered by influences that leave untouched the central faith in which an artist labors : and so it will happen that a little outward discouragement finds sometimes too ready a response in that natural despondency with which every artist of fine temper and noble ambition views an uncompleted task. The disposition which dares not hazard these discouragements is perhaps to this extent sensitive and even morbid, but it is not therefore weak or faltering ; for in apparent inconsistency and yet in combination with a character which chooses in this way to guard itself from contact with the outer world it is possible to encounter a clear and masculine judgment, and an intellect in quick and full sympathy with the varied intellectual movement of its time.

That this was so at least in Rossetti's case is known to all who knew him. In his presence it was impossible not to be impressed by the extraordinary range of his intellectual appreciation, by the certainty and strength of his judgments and by the unimpeachable security of his own personal convictions. If he chose to live apart and in seclusion it was assuredly from no inability to vindicate those principles in art which he had deliberately adopted, and for which he sought with steadfast persistence to find a worthy expression. His mind was of too robust a sort to cherish untried illusions or to indulge willful caprice and affectation ; and for what is strange in the direction of his genius

or imperfect in the form of its embodiment we must therefore seek some better explanation than that which is suggested by the outward habit of his daily life."

And again :

"In Rossetti's case it is this admixture of robust strength and penetrating refinement which partly explains the influence he exerted over minds of varying constitution not more masculine than his . . . the force of his personality has been felt and admitted in the practice of men who could never have hoped to appropriate his finer sense of beauty, men who were realists born and bred, but who, nevertheless, found in the uncompromising certainty of expression which stamps his earlier design a means of securing a closer contact with nature. And, on the other hand, the earnest and high purpose with which he sought to enlarge the vision of English painting, and to open to it a nobler inheritance of poetical truth, no less attracted to him the allegiance of others differently gifted, who came with no thought but for the beauty that is born of ideal invention, and who nevertheless equally gained from his example the encouragement and direction of which they stood most in need !"

And finally, in the last extract I feel at liberty to make, Mr. Carr touches his subject in its historical relations :

"At the age of thirty, he had already in some sense refashioned the current ideals of English art, appropriating to its uses new stores of poetry and romance, and revealing by his own practice and example the secret by which the visions of the poet might be shaped to the service of pictorial design. This, indeed, constitutes his real claim to distinction, and it is here at last that we reach the true source of his influence over men whose minds were too seriously engaged to be deluded by any empty promise of the reality. The mere desire of ideal beauty would of itself have been no new thing in English art ; for it must be allowed that the poetic ambition had haunted the spirit of many an English painter before the advent of Rossetti. Barry, Fuseli, West, Haydon, even Hilton,—they had all been professors of the grand style, had all believed that it was possible to painting to begin again just where Raphael and Michael Angelo left off, and had all so far helped to discredit a cause to which some of them, at least, were passionately attached. It would have been late in the day to revive these hapless and hopeless experiments, nor could the attempt have won the support of a generation that had learned to recognize the supremacy of those English painters who had taken no part in the race for the ideal, but who had won a more enduring fame by simple reliance on nature. Between Reynolds and Barry, between Wilkie and Haydon, there is now no doubtful choice, and at a moment when the claims of realism were once more asserting themselves, any endeavor to revert to a style that was already stamped with failure would most surely have proved fatal to its author and disastrous to his cause."

In accordance with the high rank Rossetti has been assigned, he has come to be regarded as the chief representative of English romantic art. If he is not in truth the chief, and the title is still open for bestowal elsewhere, no man of his time at least so sums up the qualities of this school, and in none, taking him in his double capacity of poet and artist, is it possible to find a more exquisite and refined exemplar of its noblest ideal. Rossetti's life, said the *Spectator*, was more that of Florence in the fourteenth than London in the nineteenth century. "In an age of domestic materialism," says Mr. Watts, who devoted to him the best year of his life, "he lived steeped in a sense of mystery as genuine as though he lived in the middle ages." "Mr. Rossetti," writes one of the earliest of his admirers, a Roman ecclesiastic, writing from the Birmingham oratory, and in daily converse with Cardinal Newman, "is a mediæval artist heart and soul. . . . His mediæval figures live indeed with the intensest kind of life.* When Mr. T. Hall Caine first saw the poet-artist in 1880 he was living in great retirement at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. Chelsea was then a favorite place of residence for people eminent in literature and art. Maclise had dwelt in this famous old row. The cottage where Turner died was standing; George Eliot and Carlyle were still living there; and not far off Whistler, etching the expanses of the Thames, and Swinburne, full of projects half romantic and half classical. But of his numerous acquaintances Rossetti was at this time seeing little or nothing; a walk in the little garden back of the house, under the sycamores, among his birds and armadilloes, a row down the river, a midnight excursion along its motly banks, or into the heart of grimy London, sufficed the recluse. His surroundings were characteristic. The house by the Thames was falling into decay, the windows dull with the accumulated dust of years, the sills hung with cobwebs, the courtyard overgrown with moss and weeds. Tangled ivy crept about the doors and eaves to cover up the visible ruin. Within, the dim light straggled with difficulty, touching with its faded rays, the cold marble floors, and striving to reach the recesses where bits of sculpture stood, cabinets of curious design, old

* The *Catholic World*, May, 1874, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. See also Sidney Colvin's remarks on Rossetti as a romantic proper. The *Magazine of Art* for April, 1882.

oak carvings, Japanese furniture, blue china ware ; and lying about in disorderly profusion were Indian spice boxes, ecclesiastical brasses, incense-burners, sacramental cups, antique bronzes, mediæval lamps. "Before going into my room," says Mr. Caine, "he suggested that I should go and look at his. The outer room was made fairly bright and cheerful by a glittering chandelier (the property once, he told me, of David Garrick), and from the rustle of the trees against the window-pane one perceived that it overlooked the garden ; but the inner room was dark with heavy hangings around the walls as well as the bed, and thick velvet curtains before the windows, so that the candles in our hands seemed unable to light it, and our voices sounded thick and muffled. An enormous black chimney-piece of curious design, having an ivory crucifix on the largest of its ledges, covered one side and reached to the ceiling.*

These details, trifling in themselves, help to bring the man and his environment before us. For this atmosphere was in a certain sense expressive of his character ; it was congenial to all that had nourished him as a child. As a child his tender mind had opened to the mediæval influences immediately about him, making the centre of his home-life, the familiar air of the household. The Rossetti household, indeed, with its family memories of Alfieri and Byron, was impregnated with the perfume of study, poetry, and romance, which had no part in the great London world outside its own inner circle. From the lips of his father, Gabriele Rossetti, the ardent Italian patriot and poet, the commentator of Dante, the young lad heard the story of Beatrice and the allegory of which she was in his father's mind the human personification, and from him also he may have learned the mystery of platonic love, as expounded in a learned treatise. His eldest sister Maria, treading in the same path, had made her own contribution to letters in her *Shadow of Dante*, and later, with that leaning towards the religious life which may be said to have marked the whole family, retired to a sisterhood in the Anglican church. His brother William Michael early developed the taste which made him in time one of the most fruitful of English critics and essayists, and beside the boy, keeping pace with, if not surpassing him in her versatile precocity, his younger sister, Christina, was, even as a

* T. Hall Caine: *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, p. 227 et seq.

maiden, pouring out her heart in sacred lyrics exquisite in their tenderness and mystic passion. A group, surely, singularly attractive in the first bloom of their literary and artistic ardor! It was indeed a dewy springtime for all these eager young hearts, living not for pleasure or the world's common tasks, but in the shadow of the great Florentine, in the noonday of Shakespeare and the mediæval ballad writers with Faust, and the *Nibelungen Lied*, and the *Arme Heinrich*, absorbed in their creations and striving themselves to embody them in immature verse or with stumbling pencil and inductile pigment. The young Dante Gabriel had begun to prattle in dramatic verse at five, we are told, and this does not seem so impossible when we read his legendary ballad of *Sir Hugh the Heron*, composed at fourteen. In his nineteenth year all the golden dream, the spiritual imaginings that had surprised his boyhood and grown with his growth, burst into full and perfect flower in the ballad-romance of *The Blessed Damozel*, next to *Christabel* perhaps the most matchless short mediæval poem that the English language possesses.

Surroundings and aptitudes like these indicate the future direction of the man, but they cannot be said to explain him. To some they will seem to fall far short of explanation. For Rossetti's peculiar strength and beauty of mind, although they may have been nourished and confirmed by outward circumstances, do not have the appearance of having been moulded originally and solely from them; this is true even of his mediæval tendency. Whatever may have been the secret force of successive generations of Italian blood and Catholic belief, whatever the power of functional development in a single groove of ideas and emotions, the environment alone fails signally to account for him. He seems to have arrived at his affinity with the middle ages by no research or effort of study, as has been the case with so many others, but involuntarily, by pure similitude of nature with its art, as Newman with its religion. The tastes, the symbolism, the mysticism of that anterior time, were 'reborn in him in modern London as strikingly as love of form and proportion in Greek art were reborn in Winckelman and Goethe.

In the development of Rossetti's art three periods have been distinguished by various critics, which represent roughly

three distinct manners or types of beauty. In the decade from 1848 to 1858 his imagination was pre-occupied with mediæval motives, and especially with the sacred legends of the church and Bible. The *Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* belongs to this time, *The Virgin in the House of St. John*, *The Annunciation* (Ecce Ancilla Domini), the first sketch of *How They Met Themselves*, *Hesterna Rosa*, *Giotto painting Dante's Portrait*, the fine engravings made for Tennyson's mediæval poems, the powerful design *Found*, and his masterpiece *Dante's Dream*, and many others. Contrasting it with later work, it at once appears that this was pre-eminently the period of the artists' highest dramatic attainment. In place of single figures, we have composition, a fertile and precise design applied to large subjects. The execution is as yet tentative, the draughtsmanship faulty, the color-sense bold and rich, but sometimes crude and insensitive to finely modulated tints. But if the technic improves afterward, his intellectual qualities, fervor, earnestness, invention exist here in the fulness of their power. These works are stamped with the impress of a high energy, a strong and passionate dramatic sense which he never surpassed, and for which we look in vain in the productions of previous art. The succeeding decade is best represented in *Beata Beatrix*, *The Beloved* (or the Bride), *Monna Vanna*, *The Loving Cup*, *The Blue Bower*, and the *Lady Lilith*, the designs for *Goblin Market*, *The Heart of the Night*, *Paolo and Francesca*, and the frontispiece to the *Italian Poets*. This fairly constitutes the middle phase of his artistic life, in which, if not so fecund and splendid in conception, his genius attains its most complete and symmetrical development. His command of the technical resources of this art is now more nearly commensurate with his thoughts; his earlier and later ideas meet in equilibrium. The third period, from 1858 to his death,* in the opinion of the best

*The critics of the *Athenæum*, January 6, 1883, of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, January 3, 1883, and of *The Times*, observe nearly the same division of periods in Rossetti's Art, but Mr. Sharp's opinion is at variance with all these, regarding the decade 1866-1876 as highest in the scale of achievement, "such a ten years of imaginative and consummate work," he comments, "as may be doubted ever to have been excelled or even equalled by any English artist save Turner."

critics, marks the moment of decline. It is illustrated by the *Venus Verticordia*, a superb work in its kind, *La Pia*, the *Rosa Triplex*, *La Ghiolandata*, the *Blessed Damozel*, *La Bella Mano*, *Fiametta*, *The Salutation*, and a crowd of figure sketches and heads in all mediums, *Fiametta*, *Pandora*, *Proserpina*, and others. But in despite of some notable works, it is clear that in this last phase of his art, corresponding, it will be observed with his years of ill health and obscured faculties, the ideal of his youth and early manhood has undergone a sad change. The power of invention has dwindled, the glowing color of his former time has become heavy and coarse, and instead of a temper nicely balanced between sense and spirit, we see here his fine mind subjugated by the excess of a single element, the mystical idiosyncrasy which informs nearly all the work of this period. As the former decades witness to the power and beauty of the romantic ideal, so in this it is impossible not to be struck with its extravagance.

In no other sphere, perhaps, does Rossetti show himself so much of a romanticist as in his treatment of love and womanhood. How this theme was handled by the pseudo-classical poets of the last century has been already noticed. Contrasted with a temper so arid and prosaic, the mood in which this modern artist approaches it brings into full relief the poetic value of the romantic ideal, when restrained by a delicate plastic sense.

Turning over a portfolio of prints of Rossetti's pictures, one passes in review a great variety of feminine type, scriptural, legendary, classical, mediæval; heads, figures, faces uplifted in devout and holy aspiration, eyes looking frankly at you out of the depths of a superb sensuousness. But in this complexity of type what especially impresses us, is the magnetic attraction of the feminine face for this dreamy and sensitive nature. It is the emblem to him of all beauty:

"This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand spake still,—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, and how many ways and days."

So he sings as the poet, and so indeed he felt as an artist. The feeling changes all his work with its subtle intermixture of sensuous and mystic passion, impregnating it with a nameless charm, an indefinite and occult suggestiveness which eludes the most searching analysis, *Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi*. In the physiognomies of women that most men passed by without a glance, his eyes discerned "the meaning of all things that are." With his constant craving for poetic beauty, there was united, however, a strain of that personal magic, which Leonardo possessed in such a supreme degree. Certain faces, certain lines, contours, and evanescent posings of the head and figure, haunt him and guide his pencil almost in despite of himself. In this, too, we see the imaginative quest of the man, dissatisfied with common fact, seeking curiously the hidden and less obvious elements of beauty.

Another thing to be noticed is that Rossetti's women are to be clearly separated from that which is often supposed to be conspicuously the pre-Raphaelite type, the pale, gaunt, angular type that has come to be popularly associated with the works of Mr. Burne Jones. With this they have absolutely nothing in common; and the later ideal woman of his art is the exact opposite. It is certainly true that the ascetic type was introduced by the pre-Raphaelites, and is to be found in the pictures of Burne Jones; and no doubt something of the popular derision that has assailed it is not altogether unmerited. Whatever may be its value to convey a certain order of emotion,—as sorrow, self-renunciation, the supremacy of the spirit over the flesh,—it expresses after all but a half-truth, and the attempt to make it a universal type of beauty is clearly an error of artistic conception. To Fra Angelico and a Roman Catholic world, the form worn by fast and vigil and mystic trance is sacred, sacred as a memory and an emblem, and the mediæval artist, working an altar, niche and screen, will wrest from it a certain secret of spiritual significance. But the beauty of the human form was never revealed to the purely Gothic sculptor, and when we see the type in its meagreness of form and sad wistfulness of countenance transferred from saints and martyrs to a group of naked young bathers, as in one of Burne

Jones's recent designs,* it leaves a singular impression of incongruity. As Rossetti avoids this archaic misconception of beauty, so he escapes what seems another blemish in the highly gifted painter I have named beside him. To dwell on Mr. Burne Jones's idiosyncrasies as blemishes is possibly rash and misleading. He is a painter of such delicate and exquisite sensibility that I use the word with regret, and also with every allowance for his peculiar gifts, which express themselves no doubt by a law of inner rightness. So when I have seen single heads and figures of his of a deep and tender spirituality, I have wondered, as many others have no doubt wondered, if the thin and pallid color in which they were sometimes embodied, was not a necessity of highly spiritual expression. Yet one is forced to ask again, is there no other medium for a kindred truth? The pre-Raphaelites themselves in a measure found an affirmative answer; the ancient prototype of Burne Jones in color, if he has any at all, is Sandro Botticelli, whom he appears to have studied deeply; but Botticelli is pallid and thin by fantasy, and what he aimed at obviously and at his best attained, as does also Burne Jones, was tenderness and delicacy of tone. In Fra Filippo, on the other hand, we have glowing and gracious color-sense, allied to an ideal of woman ample and stately in their comeliness and spiritual in their type.

If it is to this old pre-Raphaelite, and to Montegua, that Rossetti's studies of women have the nearest resemblance in general conception, yet it must be observed his types are richly various, and with an individual charm all their own, varied slightly in the transition which his art in general underwent. In his early pictures, while yet the religious sentiment was strong in him—not uppermost, for it was the artistic sentiment that was always uppermost throughout his career—his women are distinguishable for a certain decided mediæval quality; the nature of the virgin and the saints is what he strives to shadow forth, and with palpable suggestions of the ascetic element in those archaic and angular figures. In his second manner this has completely disappeared, and from this mo-

* Cupid's Hunting Ground, in the Collection of C. Ionides, Esq., and ink-photographed by Sprague & Co., London.

ment his art became romantic in the best sense, mingling with it the classical ideal in the treatment of the human form. Mediæval figure-painting was, as I have said, meagre and faulty in the extreme. The antipodes of the Greek, the mediævalist saw only shame and degradation in the body; to its beauty, its dignity and grace, he remained uniformly indifferent. "I have sinned against my brother the ass," said St. Francis, meaning his body. But in Rossetti's art, as in the highest romantic poetry, the traditions of both cultures meet and, at one moment at least, harmoniously blend, to kindle a broader susceptibility than either one by itself could attain.

In Rossetti's heads and faces the imaginative truth is complete; the poetic charm of the artist has shaped them into a vision wherein sense and spirit are wedded. There are Greeks among them, if we may trust to names, *Helens*, *Pandoras*, *Penelopes*, *Proserpinas*, but they are Greeks, after all, such as only the romantic mind could conceive. The self-poise, the joyousness, the untroubled repose of the youth of the world is in nowise to be seen in these faces, as it is seen on Athenian vases, on Olympian friezes, or in the bas-reliefs of Lucca della Robbia. The reflexive fancy of the romantic, involuntarily intertwining both instincts, has put weightier meanings in these Hellenic women, strange ardors, baffled yearnings, hope, sorrow, an overcharged experience. But upon them, as upon the creations of his own race, the *Lady of Sorrows*, the *Magdalenes*, *La Pia*, *Beatrice*, *Lucrece Borgia*, *Francesca*, the romantic artist sets the seal of his rich and subtile symbolism. And in Rossetti "the soul's sphere of infinite images" was shaken into strange lights and shadows when the faces he especially loved were present to his fancy,

"With eyes to search out and with lips to tell
The heart of things invisible."

The image of the Virgin is as familiar to him as the Syrian Venus:

"Thus held she through her childhood; as it were
An angel-watered lily, that near God
Grows, and is quiet."

And so indeed in the picture of her girlhood the face of Mary is full of tranquil dreams and visions, as she gazes before her,

seeing in mind the angel that tends the lily of the annunciation. How tenderly devout was the imagination that conceived that mood and scene! Place beside it the *Beloved*, or the *Monna Vanna*, and conceive the diversity of gifts they imply; or the frontispiece to the Italian poets, the lovers clasping hands and wedded in the first kiss of passionate love, and what a poetic charm is thrown about the supreme moment, what ardor as they lean each to each, and how chaste and restrained in its perfect grace of action and modeling! And then, beside these, another type purely introspective, the pale angular faces surmounted by a cloud of blackish brown hair, leaning forward intent, with eyes that "dreamed against a distant goal," remembering "the shades of those days that had no tongue;" and next to this that ample splendid suggestion of the Gothic Venus, the long throats, columnar and white as alabaster, the full curving lips, the eyes, placed far apart, and with lids drooping to hide the light of passion that brims them, low brows, and black thick clustering hair. In the *Venus Verticordia* we read the secret of that beauty which haunted all his later years, sumptuous as the ideal of Titian, an imperious loveliness and bodily bloom, a remorseless and insatiable craving for the love and desire of lost men's hearts. Lilith is equally as ample and voluptuous in her beauty, but not so "sovereignly direct" in her appeal to the senses; she typifies the charm of the most exquisite enticements, "subtly of herself contemplative," whose flowers are the poppy and the rose. Only the sonnets can interpret their delicate meanings, "of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen." Between these Italian faces and the purely spiritual type, there is his ideal of intellectual beauty, as in the *Sibylla Palmifera*, or *Il Ramoscello*, a fair English face, beautiful in its pure simplicity, with soft brown hair, blue eyes brimful of intelligence, and a charming sweetness of feature. In all, whatever the origin, there is more or less that cast of sadness and resignation, or of intent meditation and longing, which comes of the interfusion of the romantic emotion in the artist. The glamour of the world, alike its beauty and its enigma, its hope and its pain, its eagerness and repose, emanates from their personalities of a moment. They record in their multiform aspects the trouble and perplexity

that lies deep in the soul of him who wrought them as he stands before the veil of things questioning the unknown, not without evanescent glimpses of its secrets, but yet with a consciousness of failure to apprehend the whole, and clasp the unreachably, which flies before him as he pursues it.

In this absorption in the mystery of human loveliness, nature was forgotten, or appeared to the poet-artist only in a subordinate way. His poetry indeed is full of subtle imagery, catching the evanescent and fitful moods of natural things, and there are little sylvan scenes in his pictures. But invariably they are decorative or symbolic accessories ; a glimpse of green forest to rest the eye ; shadowy boughs or twilight streams to heighten a melancholy tale ; tendril, blossom, or leaf cluster to complete by their symbol some idea in the central figure. But Rossetti never turns to nature, as Wordsworth, and Shelley, and Tennyson, for the solace or grave joy which came to them from constant communion with visible forms. What attracted him and held him exclusively, and with a strange fascination, was the drama of human relations, especially that of love, the most intimate and complex of them all. In love and beauty he found the key of life, as these others found it in differing degrees in nature and in contemplation ; and, as with Keats before him, they became the centre of his artistic interest, the leading and vital motive of his work in both color and verse. Without seeking for the reason, it must be admitted that in his whole treatment of love Rossetti touches at the heights and depths of the romantic sentiment upon this theme. From the simple straightforward movement of passion to the transfigured vision of beatific love, he sounds its entire compass, and always with the delicacy of a pure mind and the fineness and strength of an artistic one. The sureness of his perception lifts him above the level of ethics, as it lifted Dante ; and whatever may be said of the final tendency of that substratum of sensuousness which underlies his conceptions, in his best achievement it exists only as a necessary base and in equilibrium with a delicate imaginative sense which secures it effectually from the gross censure of certain well-meaning but perverse cavilers. Above all, the shaping faculty of the artist guides him in his representation ; it

subdues the memory and ardor of love-dreams to a plastic purpose, and is in its very intensity and direction purely ideal.

The greatness and all-sufficingness of love appealed to him as it appealed to no other living poet save Swinburne and Morris, but in his praise of it, he has touched chords which are distinct from theirs, and peculiar to his more sombre and visionary genius. Upon Swinburne the spell and enticements of pure passion have a powerful and possibly too exclusive hold, and Rossetti shares with him, as with Keats and Marlowe, and some of the greatest of English singers, this susceptibility to sensible form, but how swift is his recoil upon an hour yielded to the flowers and toys of the poet's life! These indeed, as he so finely says, may be "love's true ministers," but they merit only their hour, and then are lost, merged in that graver and fuller experience of a love,

" Whose voice, attuned above
All modulation of the deep-bosomed dove,
Is like a hand laid softly on the soul !

So, dwelling an instant with the world of visible beauty, his fancy takes flight at a trivial detail and mounts into that region where perception melts in dreams and rapturous vision.

" Not I myself know all my love for thee :
How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday ?
Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
As doors and windows barred to some loud sea,
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray ;
And shall my sense pierce love,—the last relay
And ultimate outpost of eternity ?

Lo ! what am I to Love, the lord of all ?
One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand,—
One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
Yet through thine eyes he grants the clearest call
And veriest flush of powers primordial
That any hour-girt life may understand."

The sublimation of the personal element in this sonnet into the larger mystery of cosmic law, has been noticed by Frederick Myers, who has interpreted Rossetti's conceptions of love with refined discernment. Love is here, he remarks, what it was to Plato, of whom the poet himself was ignorant, ἐρμηνεύον καὶ διαποροθμεύον, the "interpreter and mediator between

God and man," a divine idea. And it is of this divine idea, and its infolded flower of truth and wisdom as yet unrevealed, that Rossetti is constantly in quest. In the very face of beauty he gazes earnestly beyond its visible form and seeks to lift the veil and impart to us the incommunicable secret. The germ of that illusion which is to be found in the old romanticism lies opened here into full flower; at first a dream, it is now a need of the poet's nature and a fruitful principle of art. But the secret, the poet knows, will never be discovered or told; it lies beyond his ken, impalpable, unreachably; it comes only by fragments, in silence, in broken melodies, in refulgent gleams of color and brightness. These shine through the tissue of his work as threads of endless suggestion, but the substance that remains behind unsung and unpainted, fill him with a mournful sense of haunting and incompleteness.

"Sometimes thou seem'st not as thyself alone,
 But as the meaning of all things that are;
 A breathless wonder, shadowing forth afar
 Some heavenly solstice, hushed and halcyon;
 Whose unstirred lips are music's visible tone;
 Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul unbar,
 Being of its furthest fires oracular;—
 The evident heart of all life sown and mown.

"Even such Love is; and is not thy name Love?
 Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends apart
 All gathering clouds of Night's ambiguous art;
 Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes above;
 And simply, as some gage of flower or glove,
 Stakes with a smile the world against thy heart."

But in speaking of the mediæval influence in Rossetti's art, it is necessary to guard against laying a too exclusive stress upon it. Although it moulded his early work, and is, I think, the true basis of his inspiration, it did not prevent his original and masculine intellect from exploring other fields of emotion. In these also the temper of the romanticist guides him, but becomes more wisely subordinate and modified to the nature of the subject-matter he has in hand. Of these essays, two powerful paintings in particular stand as chiefly representative, the design *Found* and *Hesperia Rosa*, and a brief glance at

* Modern Essays: *Rossetti and the Religion of Beauty*.

them brings into full relief that side of his genius which operated most successfully upon life in its more general aspects.

The water-color drawing entitled *Found*, or *The Farmer's Daughter*, is a study of modern life in one of its most pathetic phases. Based originally on a fine ballad of Mr. W. B. Scott, called *Maryanne*, and first drawn in 1847, while a mere lad, Rossetti returned to the subject in the last year of his life, and painted it anew, but the last finishing touches were never added. The story is a simple one, and full of a tragic suggestiveness. A countryman going to London market in the wan light of the early dawn, before the street lamps are put out, comes face to face as he crosses Blackfriar bridge, with the girl he had loved and betrothed in a happier hour. In the kindness of his heart he stoops to raise her from the wall against which she has crouched in her shame; their eyes meet and at the moment of recognition it all at once flashes over his mind in an agony of despair that she is forever and irretrievably lost to him. The sonnet written for the picture, the mournful tale in the poet's most condensed and dramatic vein.

“ ‘ There is a budding morrow in midnight; ’
 So sang our Keats, our English nightingale.
 And here, as lamps across the bridge turn pale
 In London's smokeless resurrection-light,
 Dark breaks to dawn. But o'er the deathly blight
 Of love deflowered and sorrow of none avail,
 Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail,
 Can day from darkness ever again take flight ?
 Ah ! gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge,
 Under one mantle sheltered 'neath the hedge
 In gloaming courtship ? And, O God ! to-day
 He only knows he holds her ;—but what part
 Can life now take ? She cries in her locked heart,—
 ‘ Leave me—I do not know you—go away ! ’ ”

In the picture itself, the pale, cold gleam of the dawning light strikes athwart the rustic lover, his homely gray smock contrasting with the gaudy finery of the woman, and touches her careworn face pressed close against the brick wall, as she shrinks from her sweet-heart's gaze. This face is a wonderful study; the print that Mr. Carr furnishes in the first number of the *English Illustrated Magazine* renders it expressive, but the loss of color effect is severely felt. The closed eyes,

the brows contracted with the bitter misery of the moment, the drawn lines of the mouth and the lips pursed tightly, with their pathetic memory of beautiful curves, now soiled and worn, the golden hair, a relic of her Spring-time, straggling down about the face in piteous dishevelment as if to hide it along with her woe. There is in it all a concentrated image of desolation, of recoil before the present, together with a mysteriously suggested recollection of the past days of sweet innocence and love, which, once seen, stamps itself upon the mind with extraordinary power. Placing it in conjunction with the poem *Jenny*, and weighing well the quality, the supreme imaginative force of each of them, we see how incisive and dramatically intense the genius of this man was in dealing with the tragic problems of modern life.

The other example of his treatment of common life, *Hes-terna Rosa*, sometimes called *Elena's Song*, is, if not modern in its external dress, equally representative of its spirit. It was nominally founded on a song of Sir Henry Taylor's in the second part of *Philip Van Artevelde*, and illustrated expressly the conception in the following quatrains :

“Quoth tongue of neither maid nor wife
 To heart of neither wife nor maid,
 ‘Lead we not here a jolly life
 Betwixt the shine and shade?”

“Quoth heart of neither maid nor wife
 To tongue of neither wife nor maid,
 ‘Thou wag'st, but I am soul with strife,
 And feel like flowers that fade.”

The scene represented is in a pleasure tent, at the close of a night's revel, verging on the early dawn, and the effect of the water color replica, according to Mr. Frederick Craven, the possessor, is that of a lamplight interior at this unreal hour, when, as in twilight, all objects appear absolutely blue by the contact with the warm glow within. But let Mr. Sharp describe as he saw it in a highly finished pen-and-ink drawing: “The centre of the drawing,” he says, “is occupied by a kind of sofa or couch, on or close to which are four figures, two gamblers and their mistresses; a square massive stool in front of the sofa serves for a table, on which the men are throwing the dice, one gamester sitting with crossed legs on the sofa,

and the other, to the left, kneeling beside his Rose of yesterday, who gives the name to the design, *Hesperia Rosa*. The latter gambler is still sufficiently enamored of his mistress to be susceptible to her touch, for though intent on the throw his companion is about to make, he lifts her left hand to his mouth to kiss it. But her face is averted and covered by her right hand; some sudden memory of past purity and girlhood having perhaps been struck by the low lute-music made by a young serving-maid or innocent sister beside her; her companion in misfortune, however, is either beyond or reckless of the past, and with an ungirlish song on her lips leans over the sofa clasping both arms around the neck of her lover. Both women are crowned with flowers, but they are wreaths such as Bacchantes might have worn; and beyond, on the right, a hideous ape is scratching itself, adding by its presence a significant type of degradation." It is just possible that it is the woman's song, some simple ballad heard in early days, and not the lute accompaniment, which touches the heart of her companion; but whatever the correct interpretation, the leading motive of the design is plain, and expressed with a virility and point which leaves a long remembered impression upon the mind.

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